

## **Program Announcements (PA'S)**

### **RESEARCH ON LOW BACK PAIN**

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National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases National  
Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

#### **PURPOSE**

The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) invites grant applications to study a broad range of basic and clinical topics related to low back pain. Support will be through individual research, fellowship training, and career development grants.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Low back pain is the most common cause of disability in individuals between 20 and 50 years old. It is also an extremely costly health care problem. An episode of back pain occurs in 50 to 70 percent of adults during their lifetimes. Most episodes of back pain are self-limiting. Thirteen percent of the population experiences back pain lasting more than two weeks and 5 percent have chronic disability. Most of the very high medical and social costs of back pain can be attributed to the cohort of patients that is chronically disabled. The disabled subset (2.6 million permanently disabled) is increasing 14 times faster than the population growth.

To help stimulate and focus enhanced research efforts, the NIAMS, in onjunction with the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, and the North American Spine Society, sponsored a Workshop on Research Perspectives in Low Back Pain in May 1988. A primary objective of the workshop was to develop suggestions for future research directions. A description of the workshop agenda with a list of 63 independent research suggestions was published in Spine (Vol. 14, No. 12, pp 1384-1390, 1989). Recommendations for future directions in four areas were identified: nerve, disc, posterior support structures, and muscle. Investigators interested in responding to this program announcement are invited to write or call Dr. Stephen Gordon to receive a copy of the journal article. A more detailed description of each recommended research topic is available in the workshop proceedings New Perspectives on Low Back Pain, edited by J.W. Frymoyer and S.L. Gordon, Chicago, American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, February 1989.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

This solicitation is intended to stimulate research that provides an improved understanding of the etiology, epidemiology, prevention, and treatment of low back pain. Both basic research and work that integrates the clinical syndromes with new basic research knowledge are encouraged. In many instances, collaborative and multidisciplinary research efforts may be required to achieve

significant advances. Research training and career development opportunities would be valuable for young investigators seeking to enter this field or to enhance their skills to conduct research related to low back pain.

## SCOPE

There is a great need for increased research efforts in a broad range of scientific topics related to the pathogenesis, prevention, and treatment of low back pain. The scope of the areas requiring further research was clearly described at the Workshop on Low Back Pain and in the resulting publications. No priority has been established among the research suggestions presented in the article. Applications are encouraged in any scientifically meritorious research areas related to low back pain. Research applications are encouraged from all basic science disciplines pertinent to this area, as well as the medical specialties providing primary health care for patients with low back pain including: orthopaedic and neurologic surgeons, internists, rheumatologists, physiatrists, and chiropractic and osteopathic practitioners.

The NIH requires applicants for grants to give added attention (where feasible and appropriate) to the inclusion of minority groups and/or women in the study populations for research. For proposed population-based studies that include neither women nor minorities, a clear rationale for not including them must be provided.

## APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Applications in response to this announcement will be reviewed in accordance with the usual Public Health Service peer review procedures for research, career, and training grant applications. Review criteria include: the significance and originality of the research goals and approaches; feasibility of the research and adequacy of the experimental design; training, research competence, and dedication of the investigator(s); adequacy of available facilities; provision for the humane care of animals; and appropriateness of the requested budget relative to the work proposed. Funding decisions will be based on the evaluations by the Initial Review Groups and appropriate national advisory councils. Applications should be submitted using form PHS-398 (Rev. 10/88) or form PHS 416-1 and related instructional information available in the business or grants office at most academic or research institutions, or from the Division of Research Grants, National Institutes of Health.

Applications will be accepted in accordance with the dates for receipt of new applications on a continuing basis:

February 1, June 1, October 1, for research grant applications.

January 10, May 10, September 10, for National Research Service Award applications

The Phrase "RESPONSE TO NIAMS/NINDS PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT: RESEARCH ON LOW BACK PAIN PA-91-09" should be typed on line 2 of the face page of the application. The original and six copies of the application should be sent or delivered to:

Grant Application Receipt Office  
Division of Research Grants  
Westwood Building, Room 240  
National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda, MD 20892-4500

For further information, investigators are encouraged to contact the following individuals:

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This program is described in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance No.93.846, Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases Research, No. 93.853, Clinical Research Related to Neurological Disorders, and No. 93.854, Biological Basis Research in the Neurosciences, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Awards will be made under the authority of the Public Health Service Act, Title III, Section 301 (Public Law 78-410, as amended; 42 USC 241) and administered under PHS grant policies and Federal Regulations 42 CFR Part 52 and 45 CFR Part 74. This program is not subject to the intergovernmental review requirements of Executive Order 12372 or Health Systems Agency review.